

## CHAPTER VI - THE JACKSONIAN REVOLUTION

During the "era of good feeling" in which the Virginian dynasty closed, forces had been growing in the shadow which in a few short years were to transform the Republic. The addition to these forces of a personality completed the transformation which, though it made little or no change in the laws, we may justly call a revolution.

The government of Jefferson and his successors was a government based on popular principles and administered by democratically minded gentlemen. The dreams of an aristocratic republic, which had been the half-avowed objective of Hamilton, were dissipated for ever by the Democratic triumph of 1800. The party which had become identified with such ideas was dead; no politician any longer dared to call himself a Federalist. The dogmas of the Declaration of Independence were everywhere recognized as the foundation of the State, recognized and translated into practice in that government was by consent, and in the main faithfully reflected the general will. But the administration, in the higher branches at least, was exclusively in the hands of gentlemen.

When a word is popularly used in more than one sense, the best course is perhaps to define clearly the sense in which one uses it, and then to use it unvaryingly in that sense. The word "gentleman," then, will here always be used in its strictly impartial class significance without thought of association with the idea of "Good man" or "Quietly conducted person," and without any more intention of compliment than if one said "peasant" or "mechanic." A gentleman is one who has that kind of culture and habit of life which usually go with some measure of inheritance in wealth and status. That, at any rate, is what is meant when it is here said that Jefferson and his immediate successors were gentlemen, while the growing impulses to which they appealed and on which they relied came from men who were not gentlemen.

This peculiar position endured because the intense sincerity and single-mindedness of Jefferson's democracy impressed the populace and made them accept him as their natural leader, while his status as a well-bred Virginian squire, like Washington, veiled the revolution that was really taking place. The mantle of his prestige was large enough to cover not only his friend Madison, but Madison's successor Monroe. But at that point the direct inheritance failed. Among Monroe's possible successors there was no one plainly marked out as the heir of the Jeffersonian tradition. Thus--though no American public man saw it at the time--America had come to a most important parting of the ways. The

Virginian dynasty had failed; the chief power in the Federation must now either be scrambled for by the politicians or assumed by the people.

Among the politicians who must be considered in the running for the presidency, the ablest was Henry Clay of Kentucky. He was the greatest parliamentary leader that America has known. He was unrivalled in the art of reconciling conflicting views and managing conflicting wills. We have already seen him as the triumphant author of the Missouri Compromise. He was a Westerner, and was supposed to possess great influence in the new States. Politically he stood for Protection, and for an interpretation of the Constitution which leaned to Federalism and away from State Sovereignty. Second only to Clay--if, indeed, second to him--in abilities was John Caldwell Calhoun of South Carolina. Calhoun was not yet the Calhoun of the 'forties, the lucid fanatic of a fixed political dogma. At this time he was a brilliant orator, an able and ambitious politician whose political system was unsettled, but tended at the time rather in a nationalist than in a particularist direction. The other two candidates were of less intellectual distinction, but each had something in his favour. William Crawford of Georgia was the favourite candidate of the State Rights men; he was supposed to be able to command the support of the combination of Virginia and New York, which had elected every President since 1800, and there lingered about him a sort of shadow of the Jeffersonian inheritance. John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts was the grandson of Washington's successor, but a professed convert to Democratic Republicanism--a man of moderate abilities, but of good personal character and a reputation for honesty. He was Monroe's Secretary of State, and had naturally a certain hereditary hold on New England.

Into the various intrigues and counter-intrigues of these politicians it is not necessary to enter here, for from the point of view of American history the epoch-making event was the sudden entry of a fifth man who was not a politician. To the confusion of all their arrangements the great Western State of Tennessee nominated as her candidate for the Presidency General Andrew Jackson, the deliverer of New Orleans.

Jackson was a frontiersman and a soldier. Because he was a frontiersman he tended to be at once democratic in temper and despotic in action. In the rough and tumble of life in the back blocks a man must often act without careful inquiry into constitutional privileges, but he must always treat men as men and equals. It has already been noted that men left to themselves always tend to be roughly democratic, and that even before the Revolution the English colonies had much of the substance of democracy; they had naturally more of it after the Revolution. But even after the Revolution something like an aristocracy was to be noted in the older States, North and South, consisting in the North of the old New

England families with their mercantile wealth and their Puritan traditions, in the South of the great slave-owning squires. In the new lands, in the constant and necessary fight with savage nature and savage man, such distinctions were obliterated. Before a massacre all men are equal. In the presence of a grizzly bear "these truths" are quite unmistakably self-evident. The West was in a quite new and peculiar sense democratic, and was to give to America the great men who should complete the work of democracy.

The other side of Jackson's character, as it influenced his public life, was the outlook which belonged to him as a soldier. He had the soldier's special virtue of loyalty. He was, throughout his long life, almost fanatically loyal in word and deed to his wife, to his friends, to his country. But above all he was loyal to the Jeffersonian dogma of popular sovereignty, which he accepted quite simply and unquestioningly, as soldiers are often found to accept a religion. And, accepting it, he acted upon it with the same simplicity. Sophistications of it moved him to contempt and anger. Sovereignty was in the people. Therefore those ought to rule whom the people chose; and these were the servants of the people and ought to act as the people willed. All of which is quite unassailable; but anyone who has ever mixed in the smallest degree in politics will understand how appalling must have been the effect of the sudden intrusion in that atmosphere of such truisms by a man who really acted as if they were true. With this simplicity of outlook Jackson possessed in an almost unparalleled degree the quality which makes a true leader--the capacity to sum up and interpret the inarticulate will of the mass. His eye for the direction of popular feeling was unerring, perhaps largely because he snared or rather incarnated the instincts, the traditions--what others would call the prejudices--of those who followed him. As a military leader his soldiers adored him, and he carried into civil politics a good general's capacity for identifying himself with the army he leads.

He had also, of course, the advantage of a picturesque personality and of a high repute acquired in arms. The populace called him "Old Hickory"--a nickname originally invented by the soldiers who followed him in the frontier wars of Tennessee. They loved to tell the tale of his victories, his duels, his romantic marriage, and to recall and perhaps exaggerate his soldier's profanity of speech. But this aspect of Jackson's personality has been too much stressed. It was stressed by his friends to advertise his personality and by his enemies to disparage it. It is not false, but it may lead us to read history falsely. Just as Danton's loud voice, large gesture and occasional violence tend to produce a portrait of him which ignores the lucidity of his mind and the practicality of his instincts, making him a mere chaotic demagogue, so the "Old Hickory" legend makes Jackson too much the peppery old soldier and ignores his sagacity, which was in essential matters remarkable. His strong prejudices and his hasty temper

often led him wrong in his estimate of individuals, but he was hardly ever at fault in his judgment of masses of men--presenting therein an almost exact contrast to his rival and enemy, Clay. With all his limitations, Jackson stands out for history as one of the two or three genuine creative statesmen that America has produced, and you cannot become a creative statesman merely by swearing and fighting duels.

Jackson accepted the nomination for the Presidency. He held, in strict accordance with his democratic creed, that no citizen should either seek or refuse popular election. But there seems no reason to think that at this time he cared much whether he were elected or no. He was not an ambitious man, he made no special efforts to push his cause, and he indignantly refused to be involved in any of the intrigues and bargains with which Washington was buzzing, or to give any private assurances to individuals as to the use which he would make of his power and patronage if chosen. But when the votes were counted it was clear that he was the popular favourite. He had by far the largest number of votes in the electoral college, and these votes came from all parts of the Republic except New England, while so far as can be ascertained the popular vote showed a result even more decidedly in his favour. But in the College no candidate had an absolute majority, and it therefore devolved, according to the Constitution, upon the House of Representatives, voting by States, to choose the President from among the three candidates whose names stood highest on the list.

The House passed over Jackson and gave the prize to Adams, who stood next to him--though at a considerable interval. That it had a constitutional right to do so cannot be disputed: as little can it be disputed that in doing so it deliberately acted against the sentiment of the country. There was no Congressman who did not know perfectly well that the people wanted Jackson rather than Adams. This, however, was not all. The main cause of the decision to which the House came was the influence of Clay. Clay had been last on the list himself, for the West, where his main strength lay, had deserted him for Jackson, but his power in Congress was great, and he threw it all into Adams' scale. It is difficult to believe that a man of such sagacity was really influenced by the reasons he gave at the time--that he "would not consent by contributing to the election of a military chieftain to give the strongest guarantee that the Republic will march in the fatal road which has conducted every Republic to ruin." Jackson was a soldier, but he had no army, nor any means of making himself a Cæsar if he had wished to do so. Yet Clay may reasonably have felt, and was even right in feeling, that Jackson's election would be a blow to Republican Institutions as he understood them. He was really a patriot, but he was above all things a Parliamentarian, and the effect of Jacksonian democracy really was to diminish the importance of Parliamentarianism. Altogether Clay probably honestly thought that Adams was a

fitter man to be President than Jackson.

Only he had another motive; and the discovery of this motive moved not only Jackson but the whole country to indignation. Adams had no sooner taken the oath than, in accordance with a bargain previously made between the backers of the two men, unofficially but necessarily with their knowledge, he appointed Clay Secretary of State.

Jackson showed no great resentment when he was passed over for Adams: he respected Adams, though he disliked and distrusted Clay. But when, in fulfilment of rumours which had reached him but which he had refused to credit, Clay became Secretary, he was something other than angry: he was simply shocked, as he would have been had he heard of an associate caught cheating at cards. He declared that the will of the people had been set aside as the result of a "corrupt bargain." He was not wrong. It was in its essence a corrupt bargain, and its effect was certainly to set aside the will of the people. Where Jackson was mistaken was in deducing that Adams and Clay were utterly dishonourable and unprincipled men. He was a soldier judging politicians. But the people judged them in the same fashion.

From that moment Jackson drew the sword and threw away the scabbard. He and his followers fought the Adams administration step by step and hour by hour, and every preparation was made for the triumphant return of Jackson at the next election. If there was plenty of scurrility against Adams and Clay in the journals of the Jacksonian party, it must be owned that the scribblers who supported the Administration stooped lower when they sought to attack Jackson through his wife, whom he had married under circumstances which gave a handle to slander. The nation was overwhelmingly with Jackson, and the Government of Quincey Adams was almost as much hated and abused as that of old John Adams had been. The tendency of recent American writers has been to defend the unpopular President and to represent the campaign against him and his Secretary as grossly unjust. The fact is that many of the charges brought against both were quite unfounded, but that the real and just cause of the popular anger against the Administration was its tainted origin.

The new elections came in 1828, and the rejected of Congress carried the whole country. The shadowy figment of the "Electoral College," already worn somewhat thin, was swept away and Jackson was chosen as by a plebiscite. That was the first and most important step in the Jacksonian Revolution. The founders of the Republic, while acknowledging the sovereignty of the people, had nevertheless framed the Constitution with the intention of excluding the people from any direct share in the election of the Chief Magistrate. The feeble check which they had

devised was nullified. The Sovereign People, balked in 1824, claimed its own in 1828, and Jackson went to the White House as its direct nominee.

His first step was to make a pretty thorough clearance of the Departmental Offices from the highest to the lowest. This action, which inaugurated what is called in America the "Spoils System" and has been imitated by subsequent Presidents down to the present time, is legitimately regarded as the least defensible part of Jackson's policy. There can be little doubt that the ultimate effect was bad, especially as an example; but in Jackson's case there were extenuating circumstances. He was justly conscious of a mandate from the people to govern. He had against him a coalition of the politicians who had till that moment monopolized power, and the public offices were naturally full of their creatures. He knew that he would have a hard fight in any case with the Senate against him and no very certain majority in the House of Representatives. If the machinery of the Executive failed him he could not win, and, from his point of view, the popular mandate would be betrayed.

For the most drastic measures he could take to strengthen himself and to weaken his enemies left those enemies still very formidable. Of the leading politicians, only Calhoun, who had been chosen as Vice-President, was his ally, and that alliance was not to endure for long. The beginning of the trouble was, perhaps, the celebrated "Eaton" affair, which is of historic importance only as being illustrative of Jackson's character. Of all his Cabinet, Eaton, an old Tennessee friend and comrade in arms, probably enjoyed the highest place in the President's personal affections. Eaton had recently married the daughter of an Irish boarding-house keeper at whose establishment he stayed when in Washington. She had previously been the wife of a tipsy merchant captain who committed suicide, some said from melancholia produced by strong drink, others from jealousy occasioned by the levity of his wife's behaviour. There seems no real evidence that she was more than flirtatious with her husband's guests, but scandal had been somewhat busy with her name, and when Eaton married her the ladies of Washington showed a strong disposition to boycott the bride. The matrons of the South were especially proud of the unblemished correctitude of their social code, and Calhoun's wife put herself ostentatiously at the head of the movement. Jackson took the other side with fiery animation. He was ever a staunch friend, and Eaton had appealed to his friendship. Moreover, his own wife, recently dead, had received Mrs. Eaton and shown a strong disposition to be friends with her, and he considered the reflections on his colleague's wife were a slur on her, whose memory he honoured almost as that of a saint, but who, as he could not but remember, had herself not been spared by slanderers. He not only extended in the most conspicuous manner the protection of his official countenance to his friend's wife, but almost insisted upon his Cabinet taking

oath, one by one, at the point of the sword, that they believed Mrs. Eaton to be "as chaste as a virgin." But the Ministers, even when overborne by their chivalrous chief, could not control the social behaviour of their wives, who continued to cold-shoulder the Eatons, to the President's great indignation and disgust. Van Buren, who regarded Calhoun as his rival, and who, as a bachelor, was free to pay his respects to Mrs. Eaton without prejudice or hindrance, seems to have suggested to Jackson that Calhoun had planned the whole campaign to ruin Eaton. Jackson hesitated to believe this, but close on the heels of the affair came another cause of quarrel, arising from the disclosure of the fact that Calhoun, when Secretary for War in Monroe's Cabinet, had been one of those who wished to censure Jackson for his proceedings in Florida--a circumstance which he had certainly withheld, and, according to Jackson, deliberately lied about in his personal dealings with the general. Private relations between the two men were completely broken off, and they were soon to be ranged on opposite sides in the public quarrel of the utmost import to the future of the Republic.

We have seen how the strong Nationalist movement which had sprung from the war of 1812 had produced, among other effects, a demand for the protection of American industries. The movement culminated in the Tariff of 1828, which the South called the "Tariff of Abominations." This policy, popular in the North and West, was naturally unpopular in the Cotton States, which lived by their vast export trade and had nothing to gain by a tariff. South Carolina, Calhoun's State, took the lead in opposition, and her representatives, advancing a step beyond the condemnation of the taxes themselves, challenged the constitutional right of Congress to impose them. The argument was not altogether without plausibility. Congress was undoubtedly empowered by the Constitution to raise a revenue, nor was there any stipulation as to how this revenue was to be raised. But it was urged that no power was given to levy taxes for any other purpose than the raising of such revenue. The new import duties were, by the admission of their advocates, intended to serve a wholly different purpose not mentioned in the Constitution--the protection of native industries. Therefore, urged the Carolinian Free Traders, they were unconstitutional and could not be lawfully imposed.

This argument, though ingenious, was not likely to convince the Supreme Court, the leanings of which were at this time decidedly in favour of Nationalism. The Carolinians therefore took their stand upon another principle, for which they found a precedent in the Kentucky Resolutions. They declared that a State had, in virtue of its sovereignty, the right to judge as an independent nation would of the extent of its obligations under the Treaty of Union, and, having arrived at its own interpretation, to act upon it regardless of any Federal authority. This was the celebrated doctrine of "Nullification," and in pursuance of it South Carolina announced her intention of refusing to allow the protective taxes in question to be

collected at her ports.

Calhoun was not the originator of Nullification. He was Vice-President when the movement began, and could with propriety take no part in it. But after his quarrel with Jackson he resigned his office and threw in his lot with his State. The ablest and most lucid statements of the case for Nullification are from his pen, and when he took his seat in the Senate he was able to add to his contribution the weight of his admirable oratory.

Much depended upon the attitude of the new President, and the Nullifiers did not despair of enlisting him on their side. Though he had declared cautiously in favour of a moderate tariff (basing his case mainly on considerations of national defence), he was believed to be opposed to the high Protection advocated by Clay and Adams. He was himself a Southerner and interested in the cotton industry, and at the late election he had had the unanimous backing of the South; its defection would be very dangerous for him. Finally, as an ardent Democrat he could hardly fail to be impressed by the precedent of the Kentucky Resolutions, which had Jefferson's authority behind them, and, perhaps to enforce this point, Jefferson's birthday was chosen as the occasion when the President was to be committed to Nullification.

A Democratic banquet was held at Washington in honour of the founder of the party. Jackson was present, and so were Calhoun and the leading Nullifiers. Speeches had to be made and toasts given, the burden of which was a glorification of State Sovereignty and a defence of Nullification. Then Jackson rose and gave his famous toast: "Our Union: it must be preserved." Calhoun tried to counter it by giving: "Our Union, next to our liberties most dear." But everyone understood the significance of the President's toast. It was a declaration of war.

The Nullifiers had quite miscalculated Jackson's attitude. He was a Southerner by birth, but a frontiersman by upbringing, and all the formative influences of his youth were of the West. It has been noted how strongly the feeling of the West made for the new unity, and in no Westerner was the national passion stronger than in Jackson. In 1814 he had told Monroe that he would have had the leaders of the Hartford Convention hanged, and he applied the same measure to Southern as to Northern sectionalism. To the summoning of the Nullifying Convention in South Carolina, he replied by a message to Congress asking for powers to coerce the recalcitrant State. He further told his Cabinet that if Congress refused him the powers he thought necessary he should have no hesitation in assuming them. He would call for volunteers to maintain the Union, and would soon have a force at his disposal that should invade South Carolina, disperse the State forces, arrest the leading Nullifiers and bring them to trial



before the Federal Courts.

If the energy of Jackson was a menace to South Carolina, it was a grave embarrassment to the party regularly opposed to him in Congress and elsewhere. That this party could make common cause with the Nullifiers seemed impossible. The whole policy of high Protection against which South Carolina had revolted was Clay's. Adams had signed the Tariff of Administrations. Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, the leading orator of the party and the greatest forensic speaker that America has produced, had at one time been a Free Trader. But he was deeply committed against the Nullifiers, and had denounced the separatist doctrines which found favour in South Carolina in a speech the fine peroration of which American schoolboys still learn by heart. Webster, indeed, whether from shame or from conviction, separated himself to some extent from his associates and gave strenuous support to the "Force Bill" which the President had demanded.

But Clay was determined that Jackson should not have the added power and prestige which would result from the suppression of Nullification by the strong hand of the Executive. His own bias was in favour of a strong and unified Federal authority, but he would have made Congress that authority rather than the President--a policy even less favourable than Jackson's to State Rights, but more favourable to the Parliamentarianism in which Clay delighted and in which his peculiar talents shone. At all costs the Kentucky politician resolved to discount the intervention of the President, and his mind was peculiarly fertile in devising and peculiarly skilful in executing such manoeuvres as the situation required. The sacrifice of his commercial policy was involved, but he loved Protection less than he hated Jackson, and less, to do him justice, than he loved the Union. Negotiations were opened with Calhoun, and a compromise tariff proposed, greatly modified in the direction of Free Trade and free of the "abominations" of which South Carolina specially complained. This compromise the Nullifiers, awed perhaps by the vigour of Jackson, and doubtful of the issue if matters were pushed too far, accepted.

Jackson did not like the Clay-Calhoun compromise, which seemed to him a surrender to treason; but in such a matter he could not control Congress. On one thing he insisted: that the Force Bill should take precedence over the new Tariff. On this he carried his point. The two Bills were passed by Congress in the order he demanded, and both were signed by him on the same day.

Upon this the South Carolinian Convention repealed its ordinance nullifying the Tariff, and agreed to the collection of the duties now imposed. It followed this concession by another ordinance nullifying the Force Bill. The practical effect of

this was nil, for there was no longer anything to enforce. It was none the less important. It meant that South Carolina declined to abandon the weapon of Nullification. Indeed, it might plausibly be urged that that weapon had justified itself by success. It had been defended as a protection against extreme oppression, and the extreme oppression complained of had actually ceased in consequence of its use. At any rate, the effect was certainly to strengthen rather than to weaken extreme particularism in the South. On this point Jackson saw further than Clay or any of his contemporaries. While all America was rejoicing over the peaceful end of what had looked like an ugly civil quarrel, the President was writing to a friend and supporter: "You have Nullifiers amongst you. Frown upon them.... The Tariff was a mere excuse and a Southern Confederacy the real object. The next excuse will be the Negro or Slavery Question."

The controversy with the Nullifiers had exhibited Jackson's patriotism and force of character in a strong and popular light, but it had lost him what support he could still count upon among the politicians. Calhoun was now leagued with Clay and Webster, and the "front bench" men (as we should call them) were a united phalanx of opposition. It is characteristic of his courage that in face of such a situation Jackson ventured to challenge the richest and most powerful corporation in America.

The first United States Bank set up by Alexander Hamilton as part of his scheme for creating a powerful governing class in America was, as we have seen, swept away by the democratic reaction which Jefferson led to victory. The second, springing out of the financial embarrassments which followed the war with Great Britain, had been granted a charter of twenty years which had now nearly expired. The renewal of that charter seemed, however, to those who directed the operations of the Bank and to those who were deep in the politics of Washington, a mere matter of course.

The Bank was immensely powerful and thoroughly unpopular. The antinomy would hardly strike a modern Englishman as odd, but it was anomalous in what was already a thoroughly democratic state. It was powerful because it had on its side the professional politicians, the financiers, the rich of the great cities generally--in fact, what the Press which such people control calls "the intelligence of the nation." But it was hated by the people, and it soon appeared that it was hated as bitterly by the President. Writers who sympathize with the plutocratic side in the quarrel had no difficulty in convicting Jackson of a regrettable ignorance of finance. Beyond question he had not that intimate acquaintance with the technique of usury which long use alone can give. But his instincts in such a matter were as keen and true as the instincts of the populace that supported him. By the mere health of his soul he could smell out the evil of a

plutocracy. He knew that the bank was a typical monopoly, and he knew that such monopolies ever grind the faces of the poor and fill politics with corruption. And the corruption with which the Bank was filling America might have been apparent to duller eyes. The curious will find ample evidence in the records of the time, especially in the excuses of the Bank itself, the point at which insolence becomes comic being reached when it was gravely pleaded that loans on easy terms were made to members of Congress because it was in the public interest that such persons should have practical instruction in the principles of banking! Meanwhile everything was done to corner the Press. Journals favourable to the Bank were financed with loans issued on the security of their plant. Papers on the other side were, whenever possible, corrupted by the same method. As for the minor fry of politics, they were of course bought by shoals.

It is seldom that such a policy, pursued with vigour and determination by a body sufficiently wealthy to stick at nothing, fails, to carry a political assembly. With Congress the Bank was completely successful. A Bill to re-charter that institution passed House and Senate by large majorities. It was immediately vetoed by the President.

Up to this point, though his private correspondence shows that his mind had long been made up, there had been much uncertainty as to what Jackson would do. Biddle, the cunning, indefatigable and unscrupulous chairman of the Bank, believed up to the last moment that, if Congress could be secured, he would not dare to interpose. To do so was an enterprise which certainly required courage. It meant fighting at the same time an immensely strong corporation representing two-thirds of the money power of the nation, and with tentacles in every State in the Union, and a parliamentary majority in both Houses led by a coalition of all the most distinguished politicians of the day. The President had not in his Cabinet any man whose name carried such public weight as those of Clay, Webster, or Calhoun, all now in alliance in support of the Bank; and his Cabinet, such as it was, was divided. The cleverest and most serviceable of his lieutenants, Van Buren, was unwilling to appear prominently in the matter. He feared the power of the Bank in New York State, where his own influence lay. McLane, his Secretary of the Treasury, was openly in favour of the Bank, and continued for some time to assure Biddle of his power to bring the President round to his views.

But, as a fact, the attitude of Jackson was never really in doubt. He knew that the Bank was corrupting public life; the very passage of the Bill, against the pledges given by any Congressmen to their constituents, was evidence of this, if any were needed. He knew further that it was draining the productive parts of the country, especially the South and West, for the profit of a lucky financial group in the Eastern States. He knew also that such financial groups are never national:

he knew that the Bank had foreign backers, and he showed an almost startling prescience as to the evils that were to follow in the train of cosmopolitan finance, "more formidable and more dangerous than the naval and military power of an enemy." But above all he knew that the Bank was odious to the people, and he was true to his political creed, whereby he, as the elect of the people, was bound to enforce its judgment without fear or favour.

Jackson's Veto Message contained a vigorous exposition of his objections to the Bank on public grounds, together with a legal argument against its constitutionality. It was admitted that the Supreme Court had declared the chartering of the Bank to be constitutional, but this, it was urged, could not absolve the President of the duty of following his own conscience in interpreting the Constitution he had sworn to maintain. The authority of the Supreme Court must not, therefore, be permitted to control the Congress or the Executive, but have only such influence as the force of its reasoning may discover. It is believed that this part of the message, which gave scandal to legalists, was supplied by Taney, the Attorney-General. It is a curious coincidence, if this be so, that more than twenty years later we shall find another great President, though bred in the anti-Jacksonian Whig tradition, compelled to take up much the same attitude in regard to a Supreme Court decision delivered by Taney himself.

Biddle and his associates believed that the Message would be fatal to the President. So did the leaders of the political opposition, and none more than Clay. Superlatively skilful in managing political assemblies, he was sometimes strangely at fault in judging the mind of the mass--a task in which Jackson hardly ever failed. He had not foreseen the anger which his acceptance of a place for Adams would provide; and he now evidently believed that the defence of the Bank would be a popular cry in the country. He forced the "Whig" Convention--for such was the name which the very composite party opposed to Jackson had chosen--to put it in the forefront of their programme, and he seems to have looked forward complacently to a complete victory on that issue.

His complacency could not last long. Seldom has a nation spoken so directly through the complex and often misleading machinery of elections as the American nation spoke in 1832 against the bank. North, south, east and west the Whigs were routed. Jackson was re-elected President by such an overwhelming expression of the popular choice as made the triumph of 1828 seem a little thing. Against all the politicians and all the interests he had dared to appeal to Cæsar, and the people, his unseen ally, had in an instant made his enemies his footstool.

It was characteristic of the man that he at once proceeded to carry the war into Africa. Biddle, though bitterly disappointed, was not yet resigned to despair. It

was believed--and events in the main confirm the belief--that he contemplated a new expedient, the use of what still remained of the financial power of the Bank to produce deliberate scarcity and distress, in the hope that a reaction against the President's policy would result. Jackson resolved to strike the Bank a crippling blow before such juggling could be attempted. The Act of Congress which had established the Bank gave him power to remove the public deposits at will; and that power he determined to exercise.

A more timid man would have had difficulty with his Cabinet. Jackson overcame the difficulty by accepting full personal responsibility for what he was about to do. He did not dismiss the Ministers whose opinion differed from his, he brought no pressure to bear on their consciences; but neither did he yield his view an inch to theirs. He acted as he had resolved to act, and made a minute in the presence of his Cabinet that he did so on his own initiative. It was essential that the Secretary of the Treasury, through whom he must act, should be with him. McLane had already been transferred to the State Department, and Jackson now nominated Taney, a strong-minded lawyer, who was his one unwavering supporter in the struggle. Taney removed the public deposits from the United States Bank. They were placed for safe keeping in the banks of the various States. The President duly reported to Congress his reasons for taking this action.

In the new House of Representatives, elected at the same time as the President, the Democrats were now predominant; but the Senate changes its complexion more slowly, and there the "Whigs" had still a majority. This majority could do nothing but exhibit impotent anger, and that they most unwisely did. They refused to confirm Taney's nomination as Secretary to the Treasury, as a little later they refused to accept him as a Judge of the High Court. They passed a solemn vote of censure on the President, whose action they characterized, in defiance of the facts, as unconstitutional. But Jackson, strong in the support of the nation, could afford to disregard such natural ebullitions of bad temper. The charter of the Bank lapsed and was not renewed, and a few years later it wound up its affairs amid a reek of scandal, which sufficed to show what manner of men they were who had once captured Congress and attempted to dictate to the President. The Whigs were at last compelled to drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs. Another election gave Jackson a majority even in the Senate, and in spite of the protests of Clay, Webster and Calhoun the censure on the President was solemnly expunged from its records.

After the triumphant termination of the Bank, Jackson's second term of office was peaceful and comparatively uneventful. There were indeed some important questions of domestic and foreign policy with which it fell to him to deal. One of these was the position of the Cherokee Indians, who had been granted territory in

Georgia and the right to live on their own lands there, but whom the expansion of civilization had now made it convenient to displace. It is impossible for an admirer of Jackson to deny that his attitude in such a matter was too much that of a frontiersman. Indeed, it is a curious irony that the only American statesman of that age who showed any disposition to be careful of justice and humanity in dealing with the native race was John C. Calhoun, the uncompromising defender of Negro Slavery. At any rate, the Indians were, in defiance, it must be said, of the plain letter of the treaty, compelled to choose between submission to the laws of Georgia and transplantation beyond the Mississippi. Most of them were in the event transplanted.

Jackson's direction of foreign policy was not only vigorous but sagacious. Under his Presidency long-standing disputes with both France and England were brought to a peaceful termination on terms satisfactory to the Republic. To an Englishman it is pleasant to note that the great President, though he had fought against the English--perhaps because he had fought against them--was notably free from that rooted antipathy to Great Britain which was conspicuous in most patriotic Americans of that age and indeed down to very recent times. "With Great Britain, alike distinguished in peace and war," he wrote in a message to Congress, "we may look forward to years of peaceful, honourable, and elevated competition. Everything in the condition and history of the two nations is calculated to inspire sentiments of mutual respect and to carry conviction to the minds of both that it is their policy to preserve the most cordial relations." It may also be of some interest to quote the verdict of an English statesman, who, differing from Jackson in all those things in which an aristocratic politician must necessarily differ from the tribune of a democracy, had nevertheless something of the same symbolic and representative national character and something of the same hold upon his fellow-countrymen. A letter from Van Buren, at that time representing the United States at the Court of St. James's, to Jackson reports Palmerston as saying to him that "a very strong impression had been made here of the dangers which this country had to apprehend from your elevation, but that they had experienced better treatment at your hands than they had done from any of your predecessors."

So enormous was Jackson's popularity that, if he had been the ambitious Cæsarist that his enemies represented, he could in all probability have safely violated the Washington-Jefferson precedent and successfully sought election a third time. But he showed no desire to do so. He had undergone the labours of a titan for twelve eventful and formative years. He was an old man; he was tired. He may well have been glad to rest for what years were left to him of life in his old frontier State, which he had never ceased to love. He survived his Presidency by nine years. Now and then his voice was heard on a public matter, and, whenever

it was heard, it carried everywhere a strange authority as if it were the people speaking. But he never sought public office again.

Jackson's two periods of office mark a complete revolution in American institutions; he has for the Republic as it exists to day the significance of a second founder. From that period dates the frank abandonment of the fiction of the Electoral College as an independent deliberative assembly, and the direct and acknowledged election of the nation's Chief Magistrate by the nation itself. In the constitution of the Democratic Party, as it grouped itself round him, we get the first beginnings of the "primary," that essential organ of direct democracy of which English Parliamentarism has no hint, but which is the most vital feature of American public life. But, most of all, from his triumph and the abasement of his enemies dates the concentration of power in the hands of the President as the real unifying centre of authority. His attitude towards his Cabinet has been imitated by all strong Presidents since. America does not take kindly to a President who shirks personal responsibility or hides behind his Ministers. Nothing helped Lincoln's popularity more than the story--apocryphal or no--of his taking the vote of his Cabinet on a proposition of his own and then remarking: "Ayes one; Noes six. The Ayes have it." Even the "Spoils System," whatever its evils, tended to strengthen the Elect of the People. It made the power of an American President more directly personal than that of the most despotic rulers of Continental Europe; for they are always constrained by a bureaucracy, while his bureaucracy even down to its humblest members is of his own appointment and dependent on him.

The party, or rather coalition, which opposed these changes, selected for itself, as has been seen, the name of "Whig." The name was, perhaps, better chosen than the American Whigs realized. They meant--and it was true as far as it went--that, like the old English Whigs, they stood for free government by deliberative assemblies against arbitrary personal power. They were not deep enough in history to understand that they also stood, like the old English Whigs, for oligarchy against the instinct and tradition of the people. There is a strange irony about the fate of the parties in the two countries. In the Monarchy an aristocratic Parliamentarism won, and the Crown became a phantom. In the Republic a popular sovereignty won, and the President became more than a king.